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SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL PHUM CG

SUBJECT: CONGO DEMANDS \$10 BN IN REPARATIONS FROM UGANDA

Classified By: Poloff Edward Bestic for Reasons 1.4 B and D

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: The International Court of Justice began hearings on April 11 on Congo's suit against Uganda for crimes allegedly committed by Ugandan forces operating in the Congo from 1998-2003. The Congolese reportedly asked for \$10 billion in reparations from Uganda. END SUMMARY.

Background

¶2. (U) In 1999, the GDRC filed a motion with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against the Ugandan and Rwandan governments, accusing the two countries of aggression and demanding they make restitution for property and national resources looted by Ugandans during the conflict. In November 2003, the ICJ accepted a Congolese request to postpone the hearing to allow for negotiations.

Hearings Resume

¶3. (U) According to press accounts, the ICJ began hearing the DRC's case against Uganda on April 11. The Congolese delegation, headed by Justice Minister Honorius Kisimba Ngoy, reportedly called for the Ugandans to pay \$10 billion in reparations for a host of crimes allegedly committed by Ugandan forces in the Congo from 1998-2003, including murder, human rights abuses, destruction of public property and illegal exploitation of the Congo's natural resources. The Congolese also reportedly claimed that the Ugandans' main objective had been to overthrow the Congolese government in Kinshasa, and cited public statements by Ugandan authorities to bolster their case. Press accounts said the Ugandan side rejected these accusations and explained that Uganda had acted to protect its own territory from rebels based in the DRC.

COMMENT

¶4. (C) The hearing is scheduled to continue at least until April 22. The GDRC's decision to pursue the case now, after having shelved it for over a year, perhaps reflects Congolese decision-makers' desire to burnish their nationalist credentials in advance of elections. The timing is odd, however, given that the GDRC is counting on Ugandan support on regional issues and the Tripartite process. END COMMENT.

MEECE